

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**ATTITUDES OF RURAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A  
SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) IN SARAWAK**

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**M.ed (Tesi)**

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as reference work. This dissertation has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non academic institution for any degree or qualification

I hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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## **ABSTRACT**

In particular, the study was designed to investigate and explore rural upper secondary students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language with regards to the contents of the attitude, context and individual variable in Sarawak. In addition, the study also sought to explore the relative significance of the language attitudes thus identified. Mixed- method was chosen with the implementation of cross-sectional survey and semi structured interviews. Cluster sampling set out with a total of 70 Form 4 students from 3 selected rural secondary schools in Sarawak. Data obtained was analysed by using SPSS software while the interviews were transcribed to refine the findings. The findings from this study indicated that the students have an excellent knowledge on the importance of English language even though they agreed that their mother tongue/ first language interfere when they speak English. In addition, study also discovered the relative significance of the language attitudes thus identified as the result indicated that the irregular use of English also related to the uncertainty of the thoughts about learning English as a second language

**Keywords:** Attitude; Rural ; Upper secondary students; ESL

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Malaysia, English is taught as a compulsory second language in all public schools whereby students are exposed to a minimum of eleven years of formal education both at the primary and secondary school levels. However, even English learning has been educated after more than ten years in schools, apparently a vast majority of Malaysian students have been unable to gain a good mastery of the language (Gurnam, 2013). This was supported by the Minister of Education, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin who stressed that English language plays a vital role in ensuring nation building (New Straits Times, May 1, 2012) as majority of the students failed to converse effectively in English.

Malaysia faces a number of challenges as far as the teaching and learning of English is concerned. Firstly is the concern on the quality and quantity of competent English teachers in the classroom. It was strongly highlighted by the Assistant Minister Of Education, Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching , as she personally announced that 70% out of 60,000 English teachers who have sat for the Cambridge Placement Test (CPT) nationwide in 2012 did not reach the competency and proficiency level in English which has ultimately alarmed all stakeholders (*Utusan Online*, June 14, 2013). Secondly, students' English proficiency due to the poor performance of our students in the Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) in 2013, where 51.8 % of our 15-year old students failed to reach even the baseline level for Reading, Mathematics and Science as reported in the local news, *The Star* (February 9, 2014).